

Department of Integrative Biology
Procedure for the Appeal of a Final Grade in a Course
Date: March 21, 2023

Policy: Students have the right to appeal a semester grade if they believe that grade to be either incorrect or inequitable when compared to the standard grading policy in the syllabus for all students taking the same course.

Students cannot (should not) petition to improve a course grade by offering to rewrite a paper, turn in additional work, or retake a final exam. The only exception would be if:

1. The option to improve a grade is available to all students in a given course, and
2. The option to improve a grade is stated explicitly in the course syllabus.

General recommendations to instructors regarding grading in Integrative Biology Classes:

- Instructors should only change a student's final grade if there has been some error in tabulating that course grade, or an inconsistency with respect to the grading standards articulated in the course syllabus for all students.
- To maintain fairness in the grading process, instructors should not take into consideration a student's past performance in previous classes or the amount of energy a student has put into mastering a subject matter to alter a student's grade for a course.
- Students should be informed of the appeal policy and procedure in the course syllabus. The entire appeal-review procedure does not need to be provided; the syllabus just needs to inform students that a policy exists and that they can find the policy in the policy section of the Integrative Biology website.

Procedure for appealing a semester grade:

1. For many of the courses we offer, there is only a single instructor. In these cases, the student will first discuss the grade appeal with the instructor of the course. For courses in our program where there are lab sections, teaching assistants, and/or multiple course instructors, the student should begin the discussion with their teaching assistant. If a resolution is not reached, then the student should open a discussion with the relevant teaching faculty; if this does not result in a resolution, then the student should discuss their grade appeal with the lead faculty member coordinating the entire course.

2. If the steps outlined in # 1 (above) do not lead to the resolution of the appeal, the student will provide a formal written grade appeal to the chair of the department within two weeks of when the final grade is posted for the course. The written appeal must include: the class, instructor, copy of the course syllabus showing grading guidelines, grade received, date and conclusion of meeting with instructor, the specific reason(s) for appealing the grade, and email address and telephone number where they can be reached for follow-up. The documentation must demonstrate how the student was either incorrectly graded for the work they did or treated in a way that was inconsistent with the standard grading policy/practice for all students taking the same course.

3. The chair of the department will typically lead the review and decision-making process. At the chair's discretion (e.g., in situations where the chair is the instructor or the chair seeks additional input), a subcommittee of individuals with expertise in teaching may be consulted or tasked with performing the review. Information collected from the student (see #2) will be used in the review and decision-making process; the chair or committee may also solicit information from the instructor regarding the grade-revision request, including the instructor's rationale for denying the student's request. When a decision is made, the chair will notify the student in writing of the decision.

4. If the department's appeal process supports the original decision, the student may make a formal written appeal to L&S Associate Dean for Teaching & Learning Administration. The decision of the Associate Dean for TLA is final.